622 both the central government and the local church. Where
651 the land has not been officially measured, which is the usual case in old Amhara territory, the mislane must rely on him for information necessary to the assessment of taxes. The cheqa shum is expected also to supervise customs evasion
622 when caravans or smugglers move through his territory. He
692 mediates between landlord and tenant in their endless little disagreement. In fact, his activities resemble those of an Elizabethan "Justice of the Peace".

He decides local disputes, in civil cases; officiates at the most common type of marriage, the "semanya" (an agreement between two kinship groups); he reads out government proclamations and decrees of the emperor at the nearest rural market place, including the call to arms in case of war. He can also indict a criminal and bring him before the "danya" the judge of the nearest market town, or to the "judges on circuit" accompanying the governor on his annual inspec-
622 tion tour during the dry season. Usually the cheqa shum is a local landlord himself, unless he has been given the post as a special favor for services rendered to the governor.

[701] Until the diminution of feudal privileges during the past decade, the cheqa shum was also responsible for providing the military-feudal chiefs and their troops with provisions when they were on march, making it unnecessary for
● [485] them to depend on supply lines. Now that army troops receive regular salaries, he still has to play host to travelling officials for their personal needs, since there are no rural hotels. They do not pay him except by promises of future favors.

1: Messing, E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

622 This change has also lightened the burden on the "gab-
485 bar", the tenant sharecropper. In the past it was the gab-
bar who had to supply the "feast" (called "gebber", with
ironic truthfulness regarding the provider) for feudal troops
on march, in addition to all his other burdens. The cheqa
shum was responsible for its collection, for only he knew
how much produce, goats, sheep, honey, etc., the peasant had
left after the heavy sharecropping rent to the landlord and
the "tithe" ("asrat") which is still payable to the central
government (formerly to the district feudal lord).

651 There is now a new tax, the "education tax" payable
even in rural areas where no government schools exist as
yet, and payable in cash only, not in produce as in case
of "asrat". This tax, too, is collected by the cheqa shum
and delivered to the mislanē who must now issue a receipt
and forward the money to the central treasury.

563 Ethnic considerations in the location of a hamlet in
361 Amhara territory apply to hamlets of scattered Falashas,
ironsmiths who observe Mosaic Judaism, and hamlets of the
Fagi, Cushitic-speaking tanners who were "Pagan" but have
recently accepted the Coptic faith and the Amharic language.
Since their services are required, they are often permit-
ted to rent land on a hill, the other side of which may
contain a Coptic Amhara hamlet. Relations between these
hamlets, beginning on strictly economic terms, often be-
come as friendly as the difference between religions, low
status of skilled smiths and tanners, and old supernatural
[622] suspicions permit. In case of such residence, one cheqa
shum may have an ethnic variety of hamlets under his do-
main, and may know far more about their "strange" inhabi-
tants and their customs than the average Amhara.

632 not far from the market. A smaller daily market for retail items would develop, so commerce proceeded even on a daily basis. A larger church school, to include some higher grades, would be set up by priests and Däbtära (scribe-choristers).

632 712 On account of the floods in the rainy season, most of this town would be on a higher level, preferably a butte overlooking a river valley from which drinking water could be brought every day. On this fertile flood plain, just below the town, there would be some grass even at the gheight of the dry season, so that the cows owned by urban citizens would always find some pasture.

[423] On this floodplain a "commons" was set aside, which no one could "enclose" for private use. It was called "ad-

[485] däbabay" or even "yähezb addäbabay", and served as camping place for caravans, for temporary storage space of their goods and their mules, donkeys or camels, prior to the slow climb up the butte to the Saturday market. This arrangement also had the advantage of military security for the town, protecting it from sneak attack of an enemy under guise of a caravan, which was not permitted to proceed upward into town until dawn. For the Amhara town, unlike the Muslim towns in the south, were not walled.

632 651 This arrangement also permitted the "nägadras" the collector of duties for the central power of the province, to keep control of the merchandise entering and leaving the market.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

*121 571 264 181 [829] A similar spirit is observed in Amhara commensality. Meals are customarily eaten from a common *ǐnjarā* basket. The sauce is ladled onto the center of the *ǐnjarā*, and is consumed ensemble by those sitting around the basket as they dip into it with pieces of *ǐnjarā* broken off from the edges. Traditional Amhara scoff at what they regard as the excessively individualistic Western custom of sitting each person down to a separate place at the table and thus depriving the meal hour of what they feel should be its basically communal tone.

*121 574 571 181 At a more formal level of interaction this disposition is expressed in the form of *hospitality*. Amhara hospitality is luxuriously attentive and thoughtful. For example, if there is foreknowledge of a guest's arrival, he is awaited at some distance from his destination and escorted with much to-do into the home. His mule is at once unsaddled and given to feed. The guest is given a place of honor in the home, and a glass of *ṭallā* is immediately brought for him. Amhara etiquette prescribes, moreover, that a glass is not properly filled unless it overflows; and it is repeatedly filled to overflowing whenever the guest has drunk some portion of the beverage. As a gratuitous gesture of good faith, the host—or his wife, or servant—tastes some of the beverage first, a sign that no "medicine" has been added. Before long the wicker table is produced, and the guest and his party are served copiously—no matter what time of day they arrive (unless, of course, it is a fasting day). When the guest has eaten to satisfaction, the host will insist that he eat some more, by repeatedly issuing injunctions like *tegābazu* ("Help yourselves!"), *mokar* ("Try!"), or *āfar sehon* ("If I become dust!"—i.e., "If you do not eat you will be condemning me to death"). The Amhara host is also likely to insist that his guest spend the night. The guest's feet will be washed, and the host's bed will be given to him, or long grass will be cut for bedding on the floor. At the time of farewell, the host and his attendants follow the guest and his party a good distance along the road. The guest continually cries, "Return! Return!" and the host agrees but continues to serve as escort.

Such hospitality is not wantonly bestowed upon the casual wayfarer. Normally it is reserved for those who qualify as worthy guests: relatives, friends, [609] or persons of high rank. Nonetheless, there does exist among the Amhara some feeling that even the unknown stranger should be shown hospitality, for he is *ya-egziābhēr engedā* ("a guest of God"). Travelers are generally assured [485] that somebody somewhere will show them hospitality; there are no inns in traditional Ethiopia, for it is considered wrong to exchange food and lodging for money.

*121 576 571 181 Related to this pattern of hospitality is a delicate sense of *respect* that the Amhara displays toward all comers; often, even toward his enemies. When two Amhara pass each other anywhere, they are expected to bow slightly and say: "How did you pass the night?" or "How did you spend the day?" If they